

Illuminating Nail Clipper

5

Technical Field

This invention relates to instruments useful in the grooming and maintenance of animals. More particularly, it relates to an improved nail clipper useful in controlling the length of keratinous growths, including without limitation nails and claws on dogs and cats, and talons of various birds.

Background

Professional quality animal nail clippers used by both veterinarians and animal owners in trimming the nails of animals, such as those of dogs and cats, have been successfully made and sold for over forty years under the trademark "RESCO" by Tecla Company, Incorporated of Walled Lake, Mich. Such clippers were initially made in accordance with the principles and features of the Laing U.S. Pat. No. 2,955,354 and later pursuant to the improvements of the Clark U.S. Pat. No. 3,838,507, both incorporated herein by reference. More recently a nail clipper of this type has been successfully modified for use in clipping human artificial fingernails by employing the principles and features of the Reiswig U.S. Pat. No. 4,856,190, also incorporated herein by reference. Other prior art patents of general interest directed to guillotine-type cutters and clippers are disclosed in the following U.S. patents, the entirety of all of which are herein incorporated by reference: 165,402; 205,088; 1,347,651; 1,927,234; 2,820,292; 2,955,354; 3,101,535; 3,299,505; 3,430,340; 3,838,507; 3,845,553; 3,855,699;

3,903,596; 4,228,585; 4,449,297; 4,856,190; 5,065,513; 5,101,563; 5,123,430; and 5,533,363 all of which are herein incorporated by reference.

During the course of the use of a nail clipper of the prior art, the groomer typically locates the cutting jaws, blades or other cutting means about the nail which is
5 desired to be trimmed, and actuates the cutting mechanism of the clipper, often by squeezing the handles on the clipper device. However, the nail includes not only the dead portion which is desired to be trimmed off of the animal, but also includes a live root portion from which the nail grows, which root portion includes various tissues, including blood vessels and nerves. Owing to the variability across species of the amount
10 which the root protrudes from the limb of the animal, it is not uncommon during a nail trimming procedure for the groomer to inadvertently cut into the root portion, causing pain to the animal, in addition to bleeding and the possibility of infection of the wound so created, which is an inherent disadvantage in the prior art. Nails, claws and talons are examples of keratinous growths.

15 Thus, it is an object of the present invention to alleviate and eliminate the cutting into the root or the "quick" of a nail during a nail trimming procedure, with the "quick" being the nerve bundle and blood supply capillaries. It is a further object of the invention to provide a nail clipping tool through the use of which it is possible to alleviate and eliminate the cutting into the root of a nail during a nail trimming procedure. It is
20 also an object of the invention to provide a nail clipper meeting the aforesaid objects, which is ergonomical to the user. These and other objects satisfied by the present invention shall become apparent from the disclosure which follows.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a device useful for cutting items needing to be trimmed, including nails, claws and talons of various animal and bird species. A device according to one form of the invention comprises an upper handle means and a lower handle means, wherein the upper handle means and the lower handle means are pivotally connected to one another. There is a cutting tang portion including a hole therethrough into which an item to be trimmed may be disposed. There is a housing portion inside of which is contained a means for effecting cutting of the item when disposed in the hole, wherein the means for effecting cutting is in effective mechanical contact with the upper handle means and the lower handle means. There is a flexibly orientable means for illumination comprising a flexible conduit having a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein the first end portion of the flexible conduit is attached to the device at a location selected from the group consisting of: the housing portion, the upper handle, and the lower handle, and wherein the second end portion of the flexible conduit comprises a lamp head in which is disposed a lamp means. There is an electrical storage battery having a positive pole and a negative pole, wherein the positive pole and the negative pole are in effective electrical contact with the lamp means to cause the lamp means to be illuminated.

The invention further comprises a process for cutting a keratinous growth including nails, claws and talons of a mammalian or avian species which comprises the steps of: a) impinging a source of light having sufficient intensity on the keratinous growth to render the keratinous growth translucent; and b) positioning a cutting device in

a desired position on the keratinous growth; and c) cutting the keratinous growth in a selected location.

5

10

15

20

Brief Description of the Drawings

In the annexed drawings:

5 **FIG. 1** shows a perspective view of a nail clipper according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows a side view of a nail clipper according to the present invention;

FIG. 3 shows an overhead view of a nail clipper according to the present invention;

10

FIG. 4 shows a side view of a nail clipper according to an alternate form of the present invention; and

FIG. 5 shows a side view of a nail clipper according to an alternate embodiment of the
15 present invention.

20

Detailed Description

Referring to the drawings and initially to **FIG. 1** there is shown a perspective view of a nail clipper **20** according to the present invention. In this **FIG. 1** there is shown
5 an upper handle means **44** and a lower handle means **42** which are pivotally connected to one another at the pivot point **47** by means of a conventional fastener, such as a rivet.

There is a cutting tang **30** which includes a cutting hole **14** into which hole **14** a nail, claw, or talon, etc. which is desired to be cut or trimmed may be disposed prior to trimming. There is also a housing portion **49** inside of which is contained a mechanical
10 means for effecting cutting of an item when disposed in the cutting hole **14**, wherein the means for effecting cutting is in effective mechanical contact with the upper handle means and the lower handle means. The housing portion may be open to the exterior surroundings, or may be closed thereto by virtue of its construction.

A device according to the invention may include any means for effecting cutting
15 of an item desired to be cut (nails, claws, talons, etc.) contained in any of the prior art references herein incorporated by reference in the background section, which are also incorporated into this Detailed Description. Thus, a "means for effecting cutting" as used in this specification and the claims appended hereto includes any and all of such prior art mechanisms for effecting cutting of an item desired to be cut which is disposed in the
20 cutting hole **14** of the cutting tang **30** as well as that described herein. This includes those mechanisms adapted to use in cutting devices which are configured to be held and used by a single hand of a person operating the device, which device comprises two handle portions that effect a cutting by the handle portions being squeezed together.

In **FIG. 1** there is also shown a flexible conduit **10**. In one preferred form of the invention, flexible conduit **10** comprises a first end portion and a second end portion, wherein the first end portion is attached to the device at a location selected from the group consisting of: the housing portion, the upper handle, and the lower handle. The second end portion of the flexible conduit **10** comprises a lamp head **12** in which is disposed a lamp means (**51, FIG. 4**). In addition, there is a handle grip **40** disposed on the external surface of the upper handle means **44**. The handle grip **40** increases comfort in use by being contoured to fit the contours of the hand of the user, and may be made from any material, however soft polymers are preferred, such as semi-crystalline polypropylenes, EP rubbers, and various thermoset resins. The flexible conduit **10** may be attached to a nail clipper according to the present invention by any conventional means, such as by welding, adhesives, screws, rivets, crimping, or other fastening means known in the art. Similarly, the lamp head **12** may be attached to the flexible conduit **10** of a nail clipper **20** according to the present invention by any conventional means, such as by welding, adhesives, screws, rivets, crimping, or other fastening means known in the art.

FIG. 2 shows a side view of a nail clipper according to the present invention, showing the respective positions of the cutting tang **30**, flexible conduit **10**, lamp head **12**, upper handle means **44**, lower handle means **42** and handle grips **40**.

FIG. 3 shows a side view of a nail clipper according to the present invention, showing the respective positions of the cutting tang **30** having a cutting hole **14** disposed therethrough, flexible conduit **10**, lamp head **12**, upper handle means **44**, lower handle means **42** and handle grips **40**.

In **FIG. 4** is shown a side section view of a nail clipper **20** according to an alternate form of the present invention. In this figure, are shown the respective positions of the cutting tang **30**, flexible conduit **10**, lamp head **12**, upper handle means **44**, lower handle means **42**, handle grips **40**, lamp means **51**, wire **53**, handle grips **40**, battery **18**, lever tang **59**, spring **16**, blade means **55**, and link **57**. This embodiment shows how the upper handle means **44** and lower handle means **42** cooperatively function to cause the blade means **55** to move laterally about the hole **14** to shear an item to be cut which is disposed through the hole **14**. By squeezing the handle means **44** and **42** together, the lever tang **59** moves the blade means **55** across the cutting hole **14** by virtue of the lever tang **59** and blade means **55** se being connected to one another by means of the link **57**. Spring **16** has a first end portion which is anchored to the lower handle means **42** and a second end portion which is in contact with the lever tang **59**, so that when the handle means are released, the spring pulls back on the lever tang **59** to cause the handles to open up with respect to one another while simultaneously pulling the blade means **55** back to its original position, and such mechanisms are generally known in the art.

In **FIG. 4** is also shown the battery **18** in effective electrical contact with the lamp means **51** via wire **53**, which is disposed through the flexible conduit **10**. The wire **53** may be single conductor, or multiple conductor, and in one embodiment of the invention the chassis of the device is fabricated from a metallic material such as steel which enables the chassis to function as one of the wires of contact between the battery and the lamp means, thus permitting wire **53** to be a single conductor. There is an electrical switch means **69** disposed on the lamp head **12** whose function is to enable the user to selectively complete and disrupt the circuit, as desired, to turn the lamp on or off;

however, the switch means (either single pole or double pole) 69 may be disposed anywhere on the device 20. In a preferred embodiment, the lamp means 51 is an incandescent lamp, operating at a voltage of about 1.5 volts or less, and the most preferred battery is a AA size dry cell battery. In an alternate form of the invention, the battery 18 is a rechargeable battery selected from the group consisting of: nickel metal hydride batteries, nickel cadmium batteries, lithium batteries, and lithium ion batteries; however, any re-chargeable cell is suitable for use in the present invention. According to preferred embodiments of the invention, the battery 18 is of such size dimensions that it resides on-board of a device according to the present invention.

FIG. 5 shows a side cutaway view of a nail clipper 20 according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention in which the battery means 61 is a compact battery such as the type used in wrist watches and other consume devices requiring a compact source of electricity. In this embodiment, the battery 61 is disposed in the lamp head itself. Thus, it is seen that the present invention uses an electrical storage means (battery) to power the lamp means. In one preferred form of the invention, the battery 18 is affixed to the upper handle means 44. In an alternate form of the invention, the battery 18 may be affixed to the lower handle means 42. In either of these embodiments, the handle portion itself may be configured during fabrication to contain a space into which the battery may be housed. In another alternative form of the invention, the battery 61 may be of compact size and may be contained within the lamp head 12 itself. In this **FIG. 5** are also shown the flexible conduit 10, upper handle means 44, lower handle means 42 handle grips 40, spring 16, blade means 55, lever tang 59, and link 57, which is

a tiny rod or stiff wire. In this embodiment, the handle grips 40 are shown to be contoured to match the contours of certain people's hands.

The flexible conduit means 10 may be comprised of any material which is rigid enough to maintain the lamp head in any position selected by the user, so as to enable the direction of the light emitted from the lamp head to be oriented in any desired direction. However, the flexible conduit means 10 must also be flexible enough to be bent, straightened, and otherwise shaped as desired. Towards such end, the flexible conduit used by Black & Decker company in the manufacture of its SNAKELIGHT™ flashlight is but one example of a type of conduit means suitable for use in the present invention.

Another suitable material useful as the conduit means is a plastic coated metallic tubing which is comprised of a plurality of interlocking annular elements which are reminiscent of scales. The conduit means in one form of the invention is hollow, to enable passage of the wire 53 therethrough. In other embodiments, such as where the battery means is contained within the lamp head, the flexible conduit does not necessarily need to be provided with a hollow interior space through which a wire can be housed. The flexible conduit means 10 may be as simple as comprising a hollow tube or wire. In addition, the lamp head 12 may include one or more lenses useful for adjustably focusing the light beam emitted from the lamp means 51, to focus the light beam at a point at a desired distance from the lamp head 12, as the use of such a lens or lenses for this purpose is known in the art, one example of which is the MAG-LILTE® flashlight available from MAG INSTRUMENT of Ontario, California.

A clipping device according to the invention may be comprised of any material, including various metals, polymers, composites, etc. and may also further include

features which enable the blade means 55 to be changed or removed from the device, as the use of removable and switchable blades are known in the art.

Consideration must be given to the fact that although this invention has been described and disclosed in relation to certain preferred embodiments, obvious equivalent
5 modifications and alterations thereof will become apparent to one of ordinary skill in this art upon reading and understanding this specification and the claims appended hereto.

The present invention further includes all possible combinations of the features recited or incorporated by reference in the specification and/or any one of the various claims
appended hereto with any of the features recited elsewhere in the specification or
10 incorporated by reference and/or in any one or more of each of the remaining claims.

Accordingly, the presently disclosed invention is intended to cover all such modifications, alterations, and combinations.

15

20